



Week 3: IEP Implementation

Overview

For this assignment, you will continue to follow Joseph, a fictional middle school student who recently enrolled at your school. This week, you'll monitor how his program is being implemented and address any challenges. Use the ARD Meeting video located in Resources as a reference when completing this assignment.

To complete the assignment, you must familiarize yourself with both statewide special education policies and those in place at your district and school. The assignment also requires you to use knowledge gained from your lectures and readings and from communication with leaders at your school, including your principal, special education coordinator, and classroom teachers. You are expected to cite the relevant law and/or policy that you used to formulate your answers.

Rubric

Use this rubric to guide your work.

Week 3: IEP Implementation	Accomplished	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Unacceptable
Effective Implementation	Clearly articulates a vision for ensuring the effective implementation of a student's IEP using 3 paragraphs (3 points)	Outlines a plan for ensuring the effective implementation of a student's IEP using 2 paragraphs (2 points)	Vaguely outlines a plan for ensuring the implementation of a student's IEP using 1 paragraph (1 point)	Does not outline a plan for the effective implementation of an IEP (0 points)
Professional Development Activity	Suggests an effective professional development activity geared toward effective classroom implementation of an IEP using a well-developed paragraph (3 points)	Suggests a professional development activity related to classroom implementation of an IEP using 1 paragraph (2 points)	Suggests a professional development activity related to classroom implementation of an IEP using 1 brief paragraph (1 point)	Does not suggest a professional development opportunity related to effective IEP implementation (0 points)
Positive Affect on Achievement	Explains how to determine whether the accommodations produce positive results using two well-developed paragraphs (3 points)	Explains how to determine whether the accommodations produce positive results using one paragraph (2 points)		Does not explain how to determine whether the accommodations produce positive results (0 points)
Mechanics	No or few errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. (1 point)			Responses lack clarity and depth and/or have multiple errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation. (0 points)

Week 3: IEP Implementation

Directions

Review the IEP video located in the Resources section of this course, and use it to answer the questions in the workspace. You will also use information from your lectures and readings and the information you gathered in the Week 1 Assignment to suggest accommodations to Joseph's IEP. Plus you will develop solutions that will improve the implementation of the IEP at the classroom level.

Two months into the school year, Joseph's teachers are concerned because they do not think the accommodations that have been outlined in his IEP are realistic, and they don't think they are helping him. A number of his teachers have decided to implement classroom modifications for him on their own, and those modifications do not match Joseph's IEP.

Concerned that the IEP developed for Joseph is not adequately serving his needs, you call a meeting with the members of Joseph's ARD committee. At the meeting, Joseph's mother expresses concerns over his progress, as well as what she sees as a lack of communication between school and home regarding her son.

Workspace

There is often not a connection between the accommodations outlined in a student's IEP and the actual accommodations that are made in the classroom. Using evidence-based research, explain in three paragraphs how you plan to ensure that the accommodations outlined in Joseph's IEP are followed? If teachers say that the IEP accommodations are not working, what do you do?

The knowledge that students with disabilities are expected to meet the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards through the use of accommodations, and that teachers are held accountable for the progress of their students, including students with disabilities, is a key point in resolving this issue. TEA guidelines require that ARD committees make assessment accommodation decisions by using the TEKS curriculum as documented in each student's IEP. According to our District Special Education staff, often teachers implement their own modifications rather than following those defined in the IEP either out of a concern regarding accountability for Special Education students (the thought being that the student needs more assistance than the IEP prescribes to master the TEKS, or that if they do not implement the modifications the student will be placed in a different setting and will not "drag their scores down"), or due to the fact that the accommodations in the IEP were not based on measurable goals and are therefore difficult to implement and assess.

If Joseph's teachers say that the accommodations in his IEP are not working, the first question is whether or not the IEP goals were measurable. If a goal is not measurable, it cannot be measured appropriately to determine the educational outcome. A measurable goal allows staff to calculate exactly how much progress has been made, and can be measured without any additional information. In reviewing the goals presented in the ARD meeting, Joseph's counselor mentions that Joseph needs to learn more initiative, persistence, and be more determined. These are not measurable goals, but are expected outcomes of meeting the IEP goals. Three measurable goals that are mentioned during the ARD meeting rely on a point-system rating of how well "Joseph stays on task when he is in class", "Joseph completes assignments in a timely manner" and "Joseph comes to class prepared". There is evidence in this meeting that Joseph's IEP contained measurable goals.

The second question is whether or not Joseph's regular education teachers understand his IEP modifications. The ARD session brings to light communication issues with his Language Arts

teacher, Monica Diaz, in that she was not always sending all reports home, and likely not communicating sufficiently with Special Education staff and her substitutes. Obviously Ms. Diaz cares about Joseph, but feels she is “sometimes too busy” and is not doing all that she should to fully implement Joseph’s IEP. The issue with Joseph not dressing out in PE is being interpreted as Joseph not coming to class prepared; it may, however, denote a lack of understanding of Joseph’s emotional disabilities, or a misinterpretation of an accommodation. Even Joseph’s principal expresses doubts about whether he “really knows what is going on and is just trying to get attention”; she clearly needs a better understanding of the Response to Intervention (RTI) and IEP process in order to provide top-down instructional support.

To ensure that the accommodations outlined in Joseph’s IEP are followed, Joseph’s regular education and substitute teachers, along with their campus leaders, need to receive targeted professional development designed to familiarize them with the full RTI and IEP process, the requirements of TEA guidelines and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), help them understand how to implement the IEP to achieve the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), and to understand how to provide services that will allow Joseph to progress academically as required in *Board of Education v. Rowley* (1982).

In one paragraph, suggest a professional development activity for Joseph’s teachers that would help them more effectively implement his IEP.

I would design a professional development activity for Joseph’s teachers that would begin with a guided, open discussion of their beliefs, asking key questions including “What are your beliefs about educating students with disabilities?”, “Why is it important for students with disabilities to be able to meet TEKS standards?”, and “What are your major concerns for being held accountable for the academic progress of your students with disabilities?”. During this discussion I would bring up examples of TEA and NCLB guidelines including AYP, discuss IDEA requirements and categories (focusing on a deeper understanding of the emotional disturbance category), and review key components of the RTI and IEP process focusing on the teacher’s role in the collaborative team support process. I would elaborate on the LRE model, making sure they understand that the IEP is based upon the TEKS curriculum and contains specific, measurable goals and accommodations to help students with special needs to master the TEKS in the LRE. The final phase of the professional development session would present research-based strategies for minimizing behavioral problems in the classroom, tools for motivating and engaging diverse learners, appropriate interventions for challenging behaviors, techniques for keeping students on-task, and ways to accommodate differing learning styles including differentiated instructional practices that benefit students with learning difficulties.

Use two paragraphs to explain methods you will use to determine whether the accommodations provided for Joseph in his IEP have a positive effect on his achievement?

Once students are in Special Education, the ARD committee functions as the intervention team, and is accountable for student progress, with a focus on improvement through data-driven decision making and data-driven instruction. Once Joseph’s teachers have completed their professional development and we have a team who understands their role and is effectively implementing the modifications as prescribed by the IEP, ongoing data-driven decision making is used to determine whether the accommodations provided for Joseph in his IEP have a positive effect on his achievement. Accommodations are designed to 'level the playing field' so that students with disabilities have the same opportunities as students who do not have a disability to learn and to demonstrate what they have learned.

During reviews, the team will look at assessment and progress data including standardized

assessments such as the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test and other curriculum-based measurements, student information, parent information, general education and Special Education teacher information, and related service provider information to determine Joseph's Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP). The PLAAFP data will give the team Joseph's current performance level for each category addressed by the IEP, and will be compared to previous levels to measure progress towards attainment of IEP goals. If the data shows growth toward a particular goal, the IEP accommodation will either be left in place to support further growth, or may be phased out if the goal has been fully attained. If the data shows no growth or negative progress, then the accommodation is not sufficient and will either be modified or replaced with a new accommodation based on the latest PLAAFP data addressing objectives in a different format to foster attainment of the IEP goal.